

*Box Draper (Ph. G.)*

OBSERVATIONS

ON

**A B O R T I O N .**

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE MEANS

BOTH MEDICINAL AND MECHANICAL,

EMPLOYED TO PRODUCE THAT EFFECT,

TOGETHER WITH

**ADVICE TO FEMALES.**

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“Honi soit qui mal y pense.”

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PHILADELPHIA.

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1839.

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## PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

MANY a moralist, we doubt not, will start with surprise and alarm, when he first peruses the title page of this pamphlet, and will be ready to exclaim, that this is indeed the age of vice, corruption and licentiousness. What, he will say, is this to be tolerated? Is a medical man under his own name to be permitted, aye, unblushingly to reveal to men and women the mode whereby they may indulge with impunity in unrestrained sensuality, and unrestricted voluptuousness? But stop, my friend, not so fast: methinks we can comprehend what is passing in your mind, you mourn over the degeneracy of the times, the prevalence of loose doctrines—the laxity of correct principles, and the general disregard to political, civil, and moral laws. And well may the philanthropist lament over the degradation of his species; he every where meets with vice in its most odious and disgusting forms—it is confined to no rank or class—the high and the low—the rich and the poor, all appear to be more or less contaminated by the polluting doctrines of the day. Our courts he sees are filled with prisoners, and our jails with condemned criminals.

It is not my purpose, however, to go into a detail of the various vices which altogether constitute the wickedness of the times; my business, as it will subsequently appear, is with one crime alone, and when the moralist has gone beyond the title page of this essay, and ascertained our motives and the general scope of our designs, he will, instead of regretting its publication, rejoice that an effort is made to eradicate, or prevent at least, one crime, and that crime of the most diabolical nature, the murder of innocence!!!

The facilities which are afforded in all our large cities for seduction, and its consequent frequent occurrence, both by single as well as married men, loudly call for some measures whereby it may be prevented. A most pernicious and abominable doctrine is entertained and propagated—that the sexes may safely indulge in illicit connexion, and even should conception take place, detection can easily be avoided, by the ease with which Abortion can be induced. The lustful debauchee will represent to his victim, that no danger can ensue,—that she may freely gratify the strongest passion of nature, and, that if even she should become pregnant, the embryo can speedily be destroyed without either danger or inconvenience.—This then is one strong reason which induces so many females to sacrifice their virtue to the criminal passions of their destroyers. We do not pretend to assert that the apprehension of detection is the only safeguard to a woman's virtue, but we all know, that it is one of the motives

among others that has a tendency to preserve her pure.—The fear of shame has secured many a man's honesty, as well as many a woman's chastity. We have too high an opinion of our countrywomen to suppose for a moment that in their conduct, they are merely influenced by the fear of detection and shame; on the contrary, there are thousands and thousands, who are governed in their thoughts and actions by higher, nobler, and purer motives.—Their purity of soul would shrink with horror at the mere idea of pollution, and rather than shade with a thought of sin the star-light brightness of their minds—they would cheerfully give up life.

But it is melancholy to reflect, that there are many—very many—that are not thus safe; in the moment of excitement,—alone with her lover—safe from interruption—the principles of a Voltaire, D'Alembert, or the more seductive and dangerous Rousseau poured artfully into her ear, and then the positive assurance, that no danger can follow, who can wonder that many a fair flower of beauty, virtue and innocence is despoiled, and that the base passion of man, should triumph over the unsuspecting integrity of inexperienced woman. But it is not my design to write a homily on seduction, my object is to convey to my fair countrywomen some physiological facts, to guard them against the false and dangerous doctrine adverted to, and show them *that abortion cannot be induced either by medicinal or mechanical means without endangering the life of the mother.*

There are some monsters in this city, who belong to the medical profession, who endeavour to inculcate a contrary belief, and insinuate to young men, that if in their amours, they get into a difficulty, to bring the victim to them, and for a certain consideration, they will bring on abortion!! I have no hesitation in believing that many a female has been killed by these infernal villains, and I may at some future period give some expositions to the public, which will surprise the most incredulous, and call forth the wrath and indignation of the most apathetic. It is of the greatest importance that the women of our country should know something of their own systems, and the action of medicines upon the same, and thus be guarded against the pretensions of quacks, impostors, and scoundrels.

An acquaintance with Physiology, and the effects of certain medicines, is the only safe and sure preventive against those diabolical impostors who profess to produce abortion. That some antidote for these is required no one will deny.

In this compilation I have endeavoured to convey some useful instruction to my countrywomen, and I am sure that after they have carefully perused these pages, they will be cautious how they attempt to procure abortion. In the first place I have given the general signs, whereby a woman can tell whether she is pregnant or not—in the second I have traced the progress of the foetus from its formation, up to its full growth at nine months—in

the third I have given an account of the medicines which have been given to produce abortion, and in the fourth, a statement is given of the mechanical means which have been used to effect an expulsion of the fœtus from the uterus.

I trust that my labours will be properly and justly appreciated. Much time and exertion have been spent in preparing this compilation, and I most ardently hope that this humble effort will have a tendency to prevent the atrocious crime in mothers, and those aiders and abettors who are equally culpable, of attempting to produce abortion.

ALEXANDER C. DRAPER.

*Philadelphia.*

*November 10th, 1839.*

## NOTE.

In preparing this compilation I have availed myself of the following works :

Beck's Medical Jurisprudence,—this work I most urgently recommend to the legal profession; every gentlemen of the bar should be in possession of a copy. It is the best work extant on medico-legal medicine.

Chitty's Medical Jurisprudence.

Walker on Intermarriage.

Ryan's Manual of Midwifery, London.

American Journal of Medical Sciences.

Dewees' System of Midwifery.

Coxe's Dispensatory.

Rush's Medical Inquiries.

Cyclopedia of Practical Medicine.

Burn's Midwifery.

Eberle's Works.

The Medical Recorder.

Gooch's Midwifery.

Bard's Compendium.

Smith's Forensic Medicine.

Medico-Chirurgical Review, London.

Dunglison's Physiology.

Richerand's Physiology.

Maygrier's Midwifery.

## SIGNS OF PREGNANCY.

After conception has taken place, important changes occur in the system. I shall state the general symptoms, although for medico-legal purposes, I may here remark that neither one nor all of them can be relied on positively. Among the first, there is generally nausea and vomiting in the morning. I attend a lady in this city who during the first months of her pregnancy is sick at the stomach only in the evening, the general rule of the morning being in this case reversed. Water brash, or increased discharge of water running from the mouth, greater irritability of temper than usual, melancholy, a languid cast of countenance, with a dark appearance under the eyes, heart burn, loathing of food, feverish heat, emaciation, the bowels are costive, variable or depraved appetite, uneasiness in the head, sometimes headach, pains in the face and teeth. Spots occasionally appear on the face. As pregnancy increases the navel swells, and varicose tumors and watery swellings appear in the feet, ankles and legs. The breasts enlarge and a darkish brown circle appears around the nipples, and milk can be obtained by pressure. There are also, toothach, dimness of sight, impaired hearing, and an altered condition of the tongue, and want of sleep. The monthly courses are stopped,

and the abdomen enlarges. Between the eighth and tenth weeks an augmentation of the size of the uterus (womb) becomes perceptible. At that time the foetus, with the accompanying membranes, and the waters contained in them so enlarge the uterus, that it may be felt lower down in the vagina than formerly, nor does it change its place until it becomes so large as to ascend out of the pelvis, and this occurs generally between the third and fourth month. The first motions that the mother feels of the foetus is called quickening, and this generally occurs between the third and fourth month.

It is more than probable, however, that the sensation of quickening is occasioned by the uterus rising or starting suddenly out of the pelvis, which occurs at the period above stated.

On the point of time Dr. Hamilton of Edinburgh remarks, "More than forty years (says he) since I ascertained that in general quickening takes place at the completion of four calendar months after conception."

## FORMATION OF THE FŒTUS.

Much time and labour has been employed in theorizing and speculating on the subject of generation, but after all the experiments of physiologists, for 2000 years, we must concur with Mr. Abernethy in his declaration that "we know nothing of the phenomena of conception." I shall not, therefore, encumber this pamphlet with an account of the disquisitions which have been held on this matter, but proceed to detail the progress of the fœtus in its growth from its earliest appearance, until it arrives at maturity, when it is to appear in a new element, and when its change of place excites new functions, and produces a new mode of existence.— This portion of our observations will be more particularly useful to physicians and lawyers, as it will aid them in medico-legal investigations. When conception has taken place, an ovum is detached, which is carried by the Fallopian tubes to the Uterus, and has been observed in that organ by Sir E. Home eight days after impregnation. About the fourth week it resembles a tadpole, and the tail is probably the spinal marrow. A small point is perceived below the head, which pulsates, and this is the heart, and below this the abdomen appears.

Thus the brain, spinal marrow and heart, are formed before the other parts. About the sixth

week two small black spots proclaim the development of the eyes: the mouth appears shortly after, and the upper and lower limbs soon after become discernible. The intestinal tube is perpendicular, running along the spine. At two months, the eyes and eyebrows are visible: the limbs are developed, the fingers are closed on each other, the head forms the third part of the body. Between the ninth and tenth weeks the mouth closes, by the lips drawing together—the eye-lids close the eyes, the openings of the ears begin to appear; the spinal tail shortens, and the fingers assume their position.—Towards the third month the face is distinct—the front part of the chest is covered in by the sternum, the intestines hitherto contained in the umbilical cord enter the abdomen, the skin begins to be organized, and the embryo is from four to six inches in length. At the fourth month, the upper and lower extremities are equal: the skin is downy: the muscles are contractile, and the fœtus measures four inches long, and weighs about two ounces. About the fifth month, the auricles and ventricles of the heart are equal, the nails are consistent: the skin is still red: the length of the fœtus is ten inches, and the weight about sixteen ounces. At the sixth month, the hair appears: the brain is homogeneous, the length twelve inches, and the weight nearly two pounds. At the seventh month, the skin is of a rosy colour, the cellular substance becomes developed, the eye-lids are covered, the bile is bitter: the length of the body fourteen inches, the weight about three

pounds. At the eighth month, all the parts become more developed: the infant measures sixteen inches, and weighs between four and five pounds.

At the ninth month, the infant has acquired the perfect form of the human species: the two substances of the brain are quite distinct, the length of the body is generally twenty inches: and the weight seven or eight pounds.

Thus we have traced the fœtus from its first appearance in the form of a small scarcely perceptible vesicle, up through all the gradations until it appears in the perfect form of an infant.—It has lived and been sustained through a period of nine months, without breathing, a new mode of existence now awaits it; the lungs, which all this time have been in a passive state, are now to be brought into action, and the child is to perform the new function of breathing.

We may here observe that in the size and weight of different infants there is a considerable variety, during the different periods of developement; those we have given are to be considered as the general estimate, and the whole will not be found often to vary much. We will close our remarks on this branch of our subject, by quoting the beautiful apostrophe of Dr. Ryan. “How wonderful the development of the infant! Its body, consisting of a viscid gelatinous fluid after conception, and ultimately becoming the most varied and complicated machine in the Universe. A being so animated, so vigorous, so powerful; composed of bones, cartilages,

glands, joints, nerves, arteries, veins; clothed with muscles, ligaments, and membranes. How duly balanced! How aptly contrived for the various movements! How beautiful and classic the exclamation! What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties, in form and expression! How admirable in action! How like an angel! In apprehension, how like a God!"

## OF THE MEDICINES WHICH HAVE BEEN USED TO PROCURE ABORTION.

### EMMENAGOGUES AND ABORTIVES.

The class of medicines which have been most in vogue, as capable of inducing abortion, are called Emmenagogues and Abortives. It is supposed that medicines of this kind exert a direct influence over the uterus, stimulating it to action, and thereby induce an expulsion of its contents.

Whether there are any medicinal agents possessing this specific property is doubtful, the general testimony of respectable physicians is decidedly against such a supposition.

There appears, however, to be a considerable concurrence of opinion in relation to the ergot, *secale cornutum*, or spurred rye, in its effect upon the uterus, but on this I shall say more hereafter, when I come to speak of this article particularly. The generally received opinion on the subject of emmenagogues, is that they operate only on the uterus, through an impression made on the whole system, and that when given in sufficient doses to produce abortion, they must necessarily endanger the life of the mother.

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TANSY—*Tanacetum Vulgare*.—This article is in much repute as an emmenagogue, and has been

resorted to in many cases, to remove obstructions and excite abortion; we doubt its possessing any such property. The oil of tansy is a powerful stimulant, and if taken in large doses it may prove abortive, but it is attended with great danger,—as inflammation, mortification, and death may result,—when it does produce abortion, it is only through the medium of the whole system, and not from any specific action on the uterus.

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PENNYROYAL—*Mentha Pulegium*.—Pennyroyal is another remedy which is greatly relied on as an abortive, and if we were to depend upon the assertions of some, we might be disposed to place some faith in its accredited virtues. Dr. Watkins relates a case, in which the mere odour of it produced abortion, in a delicate woman in the fourth month! This partakes somewhat of a Munchausen character, and we advise the doctor when he designs to stretch a little, or give the scientific world any thing in the Longbow line, to give at least, the air of probability to his story. At the Chelmsford assizes, England, August 1820, Robin Collins was indicted for administering steel-filings and pennyroyal water to a woman, with intent to procure abortion. He was convicted, and sentenced to transportation for fourteen years. The oil of pennyroyal when taken in large quantities, exercises the same influence, and produces the same constitutional disturbance as the oil of tansy. We believe it has no specific properties as an emmenagogue, and if

taken in sufficient quantities to bring on uterine action, it is secondary to, and consequent upon a general irritation upon the constitution.

When employed in these large doses death to the mother may be the result, in consequence of its inducing active inflammation. In the case of Eliza Sowers, it is clear from the evidence that she must have taken large quantities of the oils of pennyroyal and tansy, previous to her coming under the care of Dr. Chauncey.

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SAVINE—*Juniperus Sabina*.—Among the various agents supposed to possess abortive powers, savine ranks among the first. The following account of this article we extract from Beck's Medical Jurisprudence. "This, (says he) is a powerfully stimulating article, and as an emmenagogue, has been used with considerable effect. It has long been used for the purpose of producing abortion, and no doubt possesses considerable power in this way. Galen asserts, that it acts with sufficient energy on the uterus to destroy the fœtus, and in the present day, it is said to be constantly used by the Negresses in the Isle of France with this intention."

In the case of Miss Burns, for whose murder Mr. Angus was tried at Lancaster, in 1808, there is reason to believe from the testimony offered, that savine oil had been administered to effect an abortion.

That it does not always succeed, is evident from a case related by Foderé. In 1790 a poor imbecile,

and cachectic girl, in the duchy of Aoust, in the seventh month of her pregnancy, took from the hands of her seducer a glass of wine, in which there was mixed a large dose of powdered savine. She became so ill, that report of it was made to the magistrate, who ordered Foderé to visit her. The patient stated to him, that on taking the drug she felt a burning heat, accompanied with hiccup and vomiting. This was followed by a violent fever, which continued for fifteen days. By the proper use of refrigerants, however, she recovered, and at the end of two months was safely delivered of a hearty child. In another case, recorded by Murray, while it was successful in producing an abortion, it destroyed the life of the mother. Professor Christison relates, on authority of Mr. Cockson, the case of a girl, who to produce abortion, took a strong infusion of savine leaves. Violent pain in the abdomen, and distressing strangury ensued. In two days after taking it, she miscarried, and in four after that, she died. On dissection, Mr. Cockson found extensive peritoneal inflammation—the inside of the stomach of a red tint, chequered with patches of florid extravasation. A case some time since, was tried before one of our Massachusetts courts, for giving savine oil to a pregnant woman. I don't recollect how the case terminated, but this I distinctly remember, that it was very evident that the death of the woman was occasioned by her taking the oil of savine. I would particularly caution my countrywomen against the

use of this article ; it is one of great power, and is well calculated to induce dangerous inflammation.

**RUTA GRAVEOLENS.**—**Rue.**—We are not aware that in this country rue has ever been considered as an emmenagogue, but it appears from a memoir in one of the French Journals, from Dr. Helie, that in France it is chiefly trusted to as a provocative of abortion. Like all other medicines employed as abortives it displays poisonous qualities, and produces alarming symptoms ; as will appear from the subjoined cases as reported by Dr. Helie.

“ There has been much difference of opinion as to the medicinal effects of rue ; some alleging that it exerts a direct and immediate action on the uterine system, while others contend that, whenever it seems to do so, this action is only secondary to, and consequent upon, an irritation of the intestinal canal and a disturbance of the nervous system ; and hence that its use much oftener fails in provoking miscarriage than succeeds.

“ To determine the question, Dr. HELIE, the author of the present observations, reports several cases. One of these is as follows :

“ A young female, having suffered a great deal in her first accouchement, was resolved to try some means to bring on abortion in her second pregnancy. She applied to Dr. Hélie for the purpose, being about four months advanced ; but he very properly declined giving her any advice, but that of dissuading her from her intentions. She told him,

however, that, if he would not prescribe for her, she would apply to some other person. A fortnight afterwards, she returned to him ; and then she was no longer pregnant. She mentioned to him that, by the advice of a woman, she had taken three fresh roots of rue, cut them in pieces, and then boiled them in a pound and a half of water down to three small cupfulls, which she drank one evening on going to bed. Dreadful pain in the stomach came on, accompanied with vomitings, and with such universal oppression, that she thought she was dying.

“ This state continued all the night, and next day the symptoms were much abated. But now she began to experience colicky pains, slight at first, but gradually increasing in severity, and returning at intervals. On the evening of the second day, they became much more violent, and were evidently the pains of labour : abortion came on soon afterwards—in forty eight hours after taking the decoction of rue.”

“ *Case 2.*—A young woman, residing in a farmhouse, was suddenly seized with most severe vomiting, violent twisting pains in the abdomen and limbs, restlessness, and tendency to delirium. She had all the appearance of being intoxicated.

“ Dr. Hélie suspected that the illness was the effect of medicines, which had been taken with the view of provoking abortion : the patient seemed to be in the seventh month of pregnancy, although she positively denied it.

“He therefore contented himself by withdrawing certain drinks which she had been using, and by confining her to simple barley-water.

“The vomitings speedily ceased; but the abdominal pains continued to increase, and in the course of the following day, she was delivered of two infants.

“Alarming symptoms of poisoning came on afterwards; but these fortunately subsided by degrees, and the girl ultimately regained her health. She afterwards admitted that she had made use of a strong decoction of rue leaves.”

“*Case 3.*—A girl, in the fourth month of pregnancy, took for several days a strong dose of the fresh juice expressed from rue leaves. Vomiting, severe cholic, great prostration, and tendency to syncope, somnolence, delirium and coldness of the whole surface came on. There was also, as in the preceding case, an inflammatory swelling of the tongue, accompanied with a profuse salivation. The expulsion of the fœtus did not happen till the sixth day after the swallowing of the poison. The acrid-narcotic effects did not cease altogether for another week.

“From the particulars of these cases, we may reasonably conclude that rue, in powerful doses, has decided narcotic irritant effects. Its action in diminishing the force and frequency of the heart’s movements appears to be as marked as that of digitalis: in some cases, under its influence, the pulse has fallen to thirty beats in the minute.

"Its peculiar action on the tongue, inducing an active inflammation of this organ, deserves notice.

"Dr. H  lie is also of opinion that it has a direct and *elective* action on the uterus, and that therefore it may be regarded as a provocative of miscarriage, quite independently of its irritant and narcotic effects on other parts of the body."

It certainly would not appear according to correct reasoning from the above cases, that rue has a "direct elective action on the uterus," on the contrary, all the constitutional symptoms which were displayed *previous*, were sufficient to account for the production of abortion without supposing any "direct elective action."

In the first case, "dreadful pain in the stomach came on," "vomitings," "universal oppression," so much so that the patient thought she was dying," "this state continued all night," and was "succeeded by colicky pains," "increasing in severity." Surely all these alarming symptoms were amply sufficient to account for abortion, without resorting to an elective action on the uterus.

The same remarks will apply to the two other cases; in all, there were violent, alarming, and dangerous constitutional disturbances, *previous* to abortion; and therefore agreeably to sound logic, we have no right to *suppose* that rue, has a direct elective action on the uterus.

Dr. Coxe in his Dispensatory, speaking of the seeds of this plant, says, "With regard to their medical virtue, like all other remedies, of which the

active constituent is an essential oil, they are heating and stimulating."

We may well suppose then that if taken in inordinate quantity, the rue, would be likely to produce excessive irritation, followed by inflammation of the stomach, intestines, and peritoneum.—Enough has been said, however, to show that it is a hazardous agent.

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ERGOT—Secale Cornutum—Spurred Rye.—This article has been supposed to exercise a direct, and specific action over the womb, and the many respectable and observant physicians who have testified to this fact, leave no room to doubt, that *under certain circumstances*, it has appeared to display an elective tendency to that organ. Dr. John Stearns in 1807, first announced to the profession its peculiar properties, and since then it has become a fashionable article in obstetric practice.

In slow and lingering labours it is given with a view to increase uterine contractions, and hasten delivery, and in some instances it has appeared to be prompt and decided in its effects, whilst in others it was entirely inert.

As a parturient medicine it rose into high repute and great popularity, until in 1812, it was suggested that the ergot in a large proportion of cases produced the death of the child. Dr. Beck says, "The observations of numbers of highly respecta-

ble physicians since that period, have tended but too strikingly, to confirm this melancholy fact. At present it will scarcely be denied by any one acquainted with the operation of ergot, that if given in very large doses, or at improper periods, it will but too certainly prove detrimental to the life of the child. It is to be feared, that for this purpose it has been but too frequently used in this country. *It therefore cannot be too strongly insisted upon, that the life of the mother is equally jeopardised with that of the child, by its improper use.*

By some it has been doubted whether the ergot is capable of producing an abortion, or whether its action is limited to the full period of utero-gestation, and when the uterus is beginning to act itself for the purpose of unloading its contents. That it does possess the power of causing abortion at any period would seem to be proved by experiments made upon animals ; and Dr. Chatard records a case of abortion, induced in the human female subject at the fourth month of pregnancy, by twelve grains of ergot. Notwithstanding all this it is a fact that ergot is no more infallible as an abortive, than any of the agents already noticed. Dr. Condie states, that several instances have come to his knowledge, in which the ergot was employed to the extent of several drachms a day for the express purpose of inducing abortion, but without exerting the least effect upon the uterus. I have myself, says Beck, met with one case in which a female who had

had several children, took of her own accord three drachms of ergot to produce an abortion, without any effect.

I know of a female in this city in her fifth month, who took six drachms of this medicine in a few hours without experiencing any effect from it, but sickness at the stomach.

We conclude our remarks on ergot with the following extract from the Cyclopedia of Practical Medicine. "This is the only article which appears to act in a special manner on the uterus, without at the same time, causing a general perturbation of the system, and may therefore be considered as an abortive. Dr. Osler, who experimented with it largely, is of opinion that it is capable of producing this result at any period of pregnancy.

But the use of this, or any other means of producing abortion, except when directed by the experienced practitioner, will either be inefficient to effect the desired result, or will jeopard the life of the woman.

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**LOBELIA INFLATA.**—This is a biennial plant and possesses in an eminent degree many excellent qualities.

Some have ascribed to it an emmenagogue property, but I can positively say, that from much experience with this plant, it certainly does not possess. I have given it in large doses to females in all stages of pregnancy, and I have never met with an instance where it produced abortion.

I have consulted many practitioners who are in the daily use of lobelia, and their united experience is against its having any abortive attribute.

It is emetic, sudorific, expectorant, anti-spasmodic, and alterative.

It is neither cathartic nor narcotic,—it has not the least claim to either of these properties.

Combined with blood root (the *sanguinaria canadensis*) it forms the best emetic known.

**SENEKA SNAKE ROOT**—*Polygala Seneka*.—Dr. Archer of Maryland, says that the common people of that state use seneka to produce abortion. We doubt its possessing any specific abortive powers.

It is in some repute however, with many practitioners as an excellent emmenagogue.

**SQUAW ROOT**—Black Cohosh—*Actæa Racemosa*.—Rafinesque in his work on Botany, states that the root of this plant is much used by the Indians to hasten labour, and facilitate delivery. Professor Tully of New Haven has written a paper on the subject, and he ascribes to it properties similar to the ergot.

**NITRE**.—Dr. Pain relates the case of a woman in Edinburgh who having swallowed by mistake a handful of this salt, suffered abortion in less than half an hour. This is a very dangerous medicine, and persons are often killed by taking it in mistake for salts.

**MERCURY.**—This metal has been considered as capable of producing abortion, and there can be no doubt in delicate females, when carried to the point of salivation, a strong tendency in that way may be induced. Mathiolus relates of several pregnant women, each of whom drank a pound of quick-silver to cause abortion, without any bad effect. Mariceau, Bell, Rush, Chapman, and others declare that a woman can go through a long course of mercury without having an abortion.

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**EMETICS** are supposed by many to favour abortion, but this is an error, unless when their action is violent, and then they produce abortion through constitutional disturbance.

Beck says, "That the vomiting produced by emetics is not unfrequently followed by consequences the most serious, both to mother and child." Burns declares that emetics are more dangerous in the latter, than in the early months of pregnancy.

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**CATHARTICS** will induce abortion if they are of an active and drastic character, particularly in weak, nervous, and irritable females. Large doses of calomel and jalap, a strong infusion of senna, mandrake in excessive quantity, and gamboge may produce abortion by their violent effects on the intestinal canal. Aloes, by acting more particularly on the rectum, (the last portion of the bowels) is well calculated to excite the uterus to action. Beck says "several cases of abortion have been

known to occur in this city, (New York) in females who were in the constant habit of taking Brandreth's pills."

In this city (Philadelphia) the same has occurred from the employment of this nostrum.

Drastic purgatives of all kinds are dangerous, the excessive action which they create frequently terminates in irremediable inflammation of the tissues of the intestines.

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DIURETICS.—This class of medicines has been thought capable of producing abortion, but they will be found generally to fail. The principal in use are oil of juniper, oil of turpentine, cantharides, balsam of fur, and nitre.

They exert no specific power over the uterus, they may however, in large doses produce inflammation.

Cantharides has been taken in large doses and yet no abortion followed. This is a very active medicine and powerfully stimulates the urinary passages; strangury and inflammation have followed its exhibition, even when taken in small quantities. Dr. James Johnson in his Medico-Chirurgical Review, mentions a case of abortion induced by cantharides taken internally, and Dr. Dewees says he has witnessed two cases of abortion resulting from the action of blisters.

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BLEEDING has been thought by some to favour abortion, but the experience of Dr. Rush is against

such a supposition, In many instances of pregnant women in which he bled often and copiously, no bad consequences followed to the foetus. The patients went to their full times and were safely delivered of living and healthy children.

I have now gone through with the principal articles which have been used as abortives, and it will be seen that they are all doubtful or *uncertain*, and that not one can lay claim to the character of a *sure, safe, and absolute abortive*.

I have now an important fact to announce, and to it I wish particular attention.

Throughout the whole period of pregnancy, from the moment of conception to the maturity of the foetus, *the mouth of the uterus is as it were hermetically closed, and therefore before the foetus can escape, this orifice must relax, enlarge or dilate*. Now even admitting that any of the medicines which I have named, had the specific power of bringing on contractions of the uterus, still there would be no certainty that the mouth of the womb would open. The probability is that it would remain rigid, and then the woman must suffer the most excruciating agony imaginable. The womb in painful spasms—the flooding probably profuse—the mouth of the uterus closed, in a short time inflammation and mortification would ensue, and the woman would die in the most horrid pain and distress conceivable.

I cannot, therefore, too urgently caution pregnant women against the use of any thing that would

bring on uterine action, it is always attended with hazard, and every attempt to interfere or interrupt the operations of nature, must be attended with great danger.

I now proceed to the subject of the mechanical means which have been employed to produce abortion.

## MECHANICAL MEANS USED TO PRODUCE ABORTION.

Blows upon the back and abdomen, dancing, riding on horseback, lifting heavy weights, splitting wood, violent exercise,—have all been resorted to for the purpose of inducing an expulsion of the foetus. All these methods however are attended with great danger to mother as well as child.

Beloe relates that a young woman between the third and fourth months of her pregnancy, received from a robust man several kicks and blows with the fist, the marks of which were very evident. Immediately after the accident, she was put to bed, bled, and various remedies given by a surgeon. The hemorrhage which had occurred immediately after receiving the injuries continued, with pains in the loins and abdomen, and on the next day she had an abortion. In another case, a female four months advanced in pregnancy had a quarrel with her husband, in which he struck her; in ten days after she was delivered of a dead foetus. Dr. Smith records a case in which mother and child both died. In 1811 a man was executed at Stafford for the murder of his wife. She was in the pregnant state, and he had attempted to induce abortion in the most violent manner, as by elbowing her in bed, &c. in which he succeeded, not only

procuring abortion, but along with it the death of the unfortunate mother.

By Dr. Campbell a case is recorded of a female, who in the last month of pregnancy was struck on the abdomen by her husband. An extensive detachment of the placenta caused the immediate death of the fœtus, and that of the mother in fifty-one hours afterwards. I know a lady in this city, who endeavoured to get a log of wood out from under some coal, in endeavoring to do this a discharge of blood took place; this, though considerable, did not alarm her. Contrary to my advice, she continued to walk about the house and superintend her domestic concerns. In three days violent pains came on attended with flooding, and in a few hours a fœtus of about two months was discharged. Much uneasiness followed, and it was a long time before this lady recovered her usual health and strength. Even to this day she complains of weakness in the small of the back, which she ascribes to the abortion. She has had several children, and she declares that her sufferings at the time of abortion far exceeded the pains of natural labor.

Puncturing the Membranes by sharp pointed instruments is another method much resorted to for the nefarious method of producing abortion. On this point a French physician, Dr. Hélié, observes: "That in Paris, the puncture of the membranes, to induce abortion, is generally resorted to; and it is truly disgraceful to think that not only many Mid-

wives, but even some medical men, lend themselves to this flagitious practice. I lately saw a melancholy case of a young woman, who died of metro-peritonitis in the Hotel Dieu of Paris, from a deep penetrating wound of the uterus, induced by the use of a trocar for the purpose of bringing on a miscarriage.

That abortion can be produced in this manner there can hardly be a doubt, but it is almost always at the expense of the mother: the irritation and inflammation of the uterus and its appendages, which almost invariably results, and which is the real cause of abortion, are usually fatal.

It was said that the wire of a catheter was used by Dr. Chauncey in the case of Eliza Sowers,—and the sapient physicians who made a post mortem examination, declared that they discovered a wound of the uterus,—but whether it was a lacerated, or incised wound, they could not tell! But this much one did say on oath, and reflect on it ye Surgeons of the day! Ponder on it well, it is a new discovery, one that escaped Larry, Hunter, Physick and a host of others; and this is what one of the Manayunk doctors declared on oath—“that there was no difference between a lacerated and incised wound, that one was as equally dangerous as the other!! That is, that there was as much danger in an incised, as there was in a lacerated wound!!! Ye teachers of Surgery alter your lectures, and change the text of your manuals, for

in all you teach that a lacerated is far more dangerous than an incised wound.

I shall not at present stop to inquire whether the uterus of Eliza Sowers was wounded or not,—but in dismissing her case I will observe, that there is much reason to doubt the testimony of Mrs. Kingsley, the principal witness for the commonwealth—and as to the medical evidence, I do not consider it worth a straw! Beck, in his remarks on the introduction of instruments into the uterus for the purpose of rupturing the membranes, says, “Of this villainous practice, which has long been known and resorted to for the nefarious purpose of producing abortion, I shall say nothing more than to give the history of a few cases in which it was used, and which will show the effects with which it was attended.

“At Durham assizes, in 1781, Margaret Tinkler was indicted for the murder of Janet Parkinson, by inserting pieces of wood into her womb. The deceased took her bed on the second of July, and from that period thought she must die, making use of various expressions to that effect. She died on the 23d. During her illness, she declared that she was with child by a married man; and he, being fearful, should she be brought to bed, that the knowledge of the circumstance would reach his wife, advised her to go to the prisoner, who was a midwife, to take her advice how to get rid of the child—being at the time five or six months gone,

The delivery took place on the 10th of July, three days previous to which, a person saw the deceased in the prisoner's bed-chamber, when the prisoner took her round the waist, and shook her in a violent manner five or six different times, and tossed her up and down. She was afterwards delivered at the prisoner's house. The child was born alive, but died instantly, and it was proved by surgeons to be perfect. There was no doubt but that the deceased had died by the acceleration of the birth of the child; and upon opening the womb of the mother, it appeared that there were two holes caused by wooden skewers, one of which was mortified and the other inflamed. Additional symptoms of injury were also discovered."

In England a very curious trial took place in 1808, of two persons, William Pizzy and Mary Codd, "for feloniously administering a certain noxious and destructive substance to Ann Cheney, with intent to produce a miscarriage." On the trial, it appeared that they had given medicines several times, to produce the abortion without any effect. In consequence of this failure, Pizzy, who was a farrier, introduced an instrument into the vagina, and in that way, destroyed the child and brought on premature delivery. This took place about six or seven weeks before the full time. Although the facts appeared very clear on the trial, yet the jury brought in a verdict of acquittal.

By Foderé and Ristelheuber a case is related, in which rupture of the uterus and death was occa-

sioned by the introduction of syringe with a long ivory pipe, for the purpose of producing abortion. On dissection, a foetus of about two months was discovered in the abdomen.

By Dr. Baxter, of New York, another case is recorded, in which he was called to a female who had employed a person to procure an abortion by the introduction of a silver catheter. The only effect however, was that of wounding the os tincæ, and rupturing the membranes without expelling the foetus. Fifteen days after the perpetration of the deed, Dr. Baxter found her in terrible pains, and having bled her twice without relief, he gave her ergot, to facilitate the delivery of the foetus, which very shortly brought it away. It was perfect, and about four months old. Unfortunately, the names of the persons concerned in this infamous transaction were never divulged.

I will record only one case more, the particulars of which I have recently been favoured with. A few years since a trial took place in the State of Vermont, in the case of Norman Cleaveland, who was indicted and tried for the murder of Hannah Rose. It appeared in evidence that Hannah Rose had become pregnant by the accused, and was about four months gone in her pregnancy, and that he had tried various means to produce an abortion, but without effect. After this he resorted to the introduction of a sharp pointed instrument into the vagina, and with the fatal result of immediately destroying the female herself. On a post-mortem

examination, the neck of the uterus was found punctured in six places, each puncture being from half an inch to three-fourths of an inch wide. The punctures appeared to have been made by a two-edged instrument like a lancet. In addition to this, the iliac vein was wounded, and the abdomen filled with coagulated blood. The prisoner was convicted and sentenced to be hung. The punishment was afterwards, however, commuted by the Legislature to five years' hard labour in the State prison.

A most extraordinary mode of causing abortion recently occurred in France, which may perhaps be appropriately noticed in this place. The subject was a married woman, who had four children and was pregnant of a fifth. At the commencement of her pregnancy, she was persuaded by the representations of another female, to inject sulphuric acid into the vagina as an easy mode of inducing premature labour. As may readily be imagined, excessive inflammation of the parts took place, together with great general constitutional disturbance, and the final result was an almost complete obliteration of the vagina. "The medical men on examination, found that a kind of irregular band surrounded and obstructed the vagina, beyond which, and on the brim of the pelvis, the head of the infant was distinctly felt, pressed forward by the uterine contractions. It was resolved to make an incision through the dense membrane, but when this was done, it was found it had adhered to the

bladder, which the incision had completely divided. The delivery was not at all facilitated, and the attendants felt themselves compelled to perform the cæsarean operation. The infant was extracted dead, apparently for some time, and the mother immediately expired."

In connection with this subject, the following instructive fact is related by Dr. Gooch. "Dr. William Hunter, attempted this operation (introducing an instrument to puncture the membranes) on a young woman, at about the third month of pregnancy. He found that he several times punctured the cervix uteri, and the case terminated fatally. If this happened to one of so much anatomical knowledge and skill, how much more probable must it be in the hands of those ignorant men, by whom, for the purpose alluded to, the operation is sometimes undertaken! No doubt these attempts often prove fatal, but the murdered do not tell tales."

Having thus finished the notice which I proposed to take of the methods which have been resorted to for criminally producing abortion, I must again insist upon a circumstance, already adverted to, but which cannot be too often repeated; and this is, the danger which necessarily attends the life of the mother in every attempt of this sort. Even in cases where miscarriage results from involuntary causes, and where every prudential measure has been adopted for obviating its consequences, it is well known that the mother frequently falls a victim. How much more likely is this to be the result

when the miscarriage is occasioned by great and unnatural violence done to the system, and that too under circumstances, which generally shut out the wretched sufferer, from the benefit of all medical succour. Velpau states that he had a female under his care, who produced a violent abdominal inflammation by taking medicines to promote abortion. She died on the eighth day, without any symptoms of abortion having appeared. There is another circumstance also of great importance, which should not be forgotten. It has happened in some instances, that while the mother has lost her life in attempting to procure a miscarriage, the child has actually been born alive and survived. A case of this kind was witnessed by Foderé in 1791. A cook finding herself pregnant, and not being longer able to conceal it, obtained half an ounce of powdered cantharides and mixed it with an ounce of sulphate of magnesia, and took them down in order to produce abortion. Some hours after, she was seized with violent cholic, and brought forth a *living child*, in the most horrible pains. During the succeeding night she died. If these facts were more generally known, I suspect the attempts at abortion would be much less frequent than they are at present. With regard to the accessaries and accomplices in this crime, it would be well for them to remember, that in every experiment of this kind which they make, they take upon themselves the awful responsibility of jeopardizing not merely a single life, but two lives.

If results, therefore, from what has been said, concerning the means of producing abortion,

1. That all of them are *uncertain* in their operation upon the foetus.

2. That they always endanger the life of the mother, and

3. That they sometimes destroy the mother without affecting the foetus.

I deem it so important to enforce these results, that I shall confirm them by the following authorities. "It is evident, I believe, from experience," says Farr, "that such things, (abortives,) cannot act as efficient causes, without the aid of those predisposing causes, or natural habits of the body, which are necessary to concur with them. As attempts of this kind, however, should not be passed off with impunity, and *as the life of the mother as well as the child* is endangered by such exhibitions, if advised by any other, they should be considered as highly culpable, and for this reason should be made known."

"Every woman," says Bartley, "who attempts to promote abortion, *does it at the hazard of her life*. It may be remarked, whoever endeavours to counteract the ordinary proceedings of nature, will have in the end sufficient cause to repent the temerity."

"There is no drug," says Male, "which will produce miscarriage in women not predisposed to it, *without acting violently on the system, and probably endangering their lives*."

Smith says, "Abortion is, in general, injurious to health, and is seldom unaccompanied with suffering. The administration of emmenagogues to force a separation of the ovum, where the constitution has no tendency to throw it off, *is highly dangerous to the mother*. No drugs can act in this way upon the uterus, but by involving it in a violent shock given to the general system. *It has frequently occurred, that the unhappy mother has herself been the sacrifice, while the object intended has not been accomplished.*"

Burns says, "It cannot be too generally known, that when these medicines do produce abortion, the mother can seldom survive their effect."

The united testimony of medical men, agree that Abortion, however induced, is hazardous, and that all medicine taken to produce that effect must be regarded as an experiment of danger.



## CONCLUSION.

It will be seen, from the facts which I have stated, the arguments which I have adduced, and the unquestionable authority, by which I am supported that Abortion, whether induced by medicine, violence, or mechanical means, is at all times a process of fearful danger both to the mother and child. I trust that my efforts in the cause of virtue and truth will have some tendency in preventing the crime of Seduction. *Let my fair readers be warned by what I have written, and learn this solemn truth, that every violation of the laws of nature is followed with inevitable and unavoidable punishment.* Virtuous love, and reciprocal affection, united by the ties of marriage, are the foundation of the social state, and from which spring all the relationships of life, from families up to states and empires. The passion of love is never more abused than by those men who do not design to marry. It will generally be found that libertines will single out from among females those who are young, inexperienced, unsuspecting and innocent, who think mankind as honest and sincere as themselves—to whom they design to make their addresses. They take every opportunity to be in their company, and pretend to be ardently and passionately fond of them, when it is nothing but brutish lust that fires them.

“When men’s desires and lusts once sated are,  
For oaths and promises they little care.”

The female, who yields her virtue to the brutal desires of a false lover, degrades herself in his estimation by the infidelity she commits, and the surrender of so precious a jewel inspires a remorse and shame, when she ceases to be beloved, that constitutes the bitterest woe of life. It is surely matter of wonder, that these destroyers, though dead to all the higher sentiments of virtue and honour, are not restrained by compassion and humanity. To bring sorrow, confusion, and infamy into a family—to wound the heart of a tender, confiding and affectionate parent, and stain the character of a poor deluded young woman, with a dishonour that can never be wiped off, are circumstances, one would think, sufficient to check the most violent passion, in a heart the least susceptible of feeling.

I conclude my observations, by a quotation from Dryden on virtuous love.

“Love, studious how to please, improves our parts,  
With polished manners and adorned with arts.  
It kindles all the soul with honor’s fire :  
Curbs and restrains extravagant desire,  
And to be chaste and kind does still conspire.  
A just heroic passion, that can find,  
*No room in any base degenerate mind.*”

FINIS.